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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MANILA 001451

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EAP/PMBS, INR/EAP, S/CT  
NSC FOR GREEN  
SEOUL FOR ERIC JOHN

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PINS](#) [RP](#)

SUBJECT: TERRORIST NPA STEPS UP ANTI US THREATS ON ITS 36TH ANNIVERSARY

REF: A. MANILA 1401

[1](#)B. MANILA 887

[1](#)C. MANILA 1127

Classified By: Political Officer Joseph Saus  
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. The Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army (CPP/NPA), designated by the US as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in 2002, has increased its level of rhetoric against the USG and the GRP. While the themes of the CPP/NPA's public statements remain focused against US military assistance to Philippine security forces and the "global war on terror," the latest particular media blitz coincided with the 36th anniversary of the NPA's founding on March 29. Beyond rhetoric, there are no indications of active NPA terror plots or operations against US targets or forces in-country, although the group continues to claim the right to defend itself should US troops engage in combat operations against NPA forces. NPA opportunistic attacks against US forces are possible if physical security measures are reduced or inadequate, and targets are caught isolated. The Mission and the GRP are meeting the CPP's rhetoric head-on to combat its misinformation and counter its long-standing insurgency. End Summary.

#### Intensified Anniversary Rhetoric

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[1](#)2. (SBU) In celebration of the 36th anniversary of its founding, the CPP/NPA's spokesman Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal engaged in a media blitz threatening US troops in the Philippines and criticizing US counterterrorism policies -- specifically US military assistance to the Philippines. Rosal's media statements were typically full of misinformation and anti-US bias. In a March 26 press release, he painted US claims of instability in the Philippines in its travel advisories as a pretext for increased US military "intervention" -- the CPP/NPA's working term for US counterterrorism assistance and training to Philippine police and military forces, including humanitarian assistance and civil-military operations. An editorial in the March 7 "Ang Bayan" (the CPP's official newspaper) separately criticized the March 2005 US-RP Balikatan military exercises as part of a "rising tide of US military intervention."

[1](#)3. (SBU) In a March 29 "Message to the New People's Army," the CPP Central Committee separately provided its combatants a pep talk, stressing that the US-led "world capitalist system and its domestic ruling system (the GRP) is worsening." The lengthy diatribe was a showcase of the Communist worldview, citing alleged socio-economic problems resulting from globalization, US "imperial overstretch," and the ineffectiveness of the Philippine "puppet regime." The document closed with a section apparently intended to inspire the NPA to a higher level of people's war, but also describing the NPA's general operating plans. It claimed NPA units are growing to include "130 guerrilla fronts covering significant portions of nearly 70 provinces, in around 800 municipalities and more than 9,000 barrios." It added that recruitment and indoctrination of the population continues at a brisk pace, and that the NPA would supply itself with arms captured from the government by attacking its facilities and supply lines. It expressed the CPP's hope of attaining 140 fronts, each with a company-sized unit (about 100 fighters). The CPP Central Committee document noted its people's war would continue as a low level insurgency, relying largely on guerrilla tactics. (comment: Facts and figures supplied by the CPP are most definitely inflated. In contrast, the Armed Forces of the Philippines announced in a January press release that the NPA operates 106 fronts with a total of 8,240 fighters -- a yearly decrease of seven percent. We judge this figure to be deflated in order to show progress in its fight against the NPA. End comment.)

#### Countering The Media Offensive

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[1](#)4. (SBU) The AFP and Philippine National Police PNP spokesmen moved quickly to attack the CPP/NPA's rhetoric,

calling the threats an "empty boast." AFP spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Buenaventura Pascual stressed to the media that the NPA can only attack isolated outposts, and confirmed that US troops in the March 2005 Balikatan exercise in Quezon Province (devastated by severe storms and flooding last December) conducted engineering, medical, and dental missions. PNP spokesman Senior Superintendent (Colonel equivalent) Leopoldo Bataoil said publicly that NPA comments actually undercut its support among the population. Bataoil, a 2005 graduate of the International Law Enforcement Academy/Bangkok's "Combating Transnational Terrorism" course, also stressed the need for public support in reporting to authorities "any planned attack so (the PNP) can respond accordingly."

Comment; Threat Against US Likely Exaggerated  
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15. (C) Inflammatory CPP/NPA rhetoric is very common, especially coming from the incendiary "Ka Roger. Nonetheless, the NPA's low-intensity insurgency will continue, absent a formal cease-fire or GRP military victory, both still highly unlikely. The NPA nearly always caveats its threats against the US military with the condition that US troops should not operate in "NPA areas" or directly against NPA units -- tasks the AFP or the PNP exclusively undertake under current US-GRP procedures. The AFP continues to provide effective security for US humanitarian operations near NPA areas, and there are no active NPA operations against US targets, according to Mission offices that track CPP/NPA threats. As with any solid counterinsurgency strategy, the key to the endgame lies in winning the hearts and minds of the population. US military humanitarian missions and our public diplomacy efforts at media events have always focused on positive US contributions extended to the Filipino people. We support and publicly acknowledge the GRP's own efforts in combating and weakening the Communist insurgency, as well as other insurgent and terrorist threats here. As reported in ref A, the NPA nonetheless remains a formidable threat to GRP security forces and local officials for the foreseeable future. Tensions are currently high in CPP/NPA ranks over unsolved systematic assassinations of leftists as well as the volatile labor dispute at Hacienda Luisita (ref B). Threats will continue against US forces, which may encounter an opportu